

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

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AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

726
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After the fast-loading gun with cartridges already fixed was in use, you had to be very quick and a good warrior to use a spear. Not everyone used spears. Just a few were brave enough to use a spear that close.

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Before the beginning of the journey constant measures of a religious nature are taken. Amulets are procured; protective caps and jackets are made or refurbished; shamans are consulted concerning the probable outcome of the expedition. "The leader goes to a shaman and says, 'You know something. Help us. What will happen?' Then the shaman sings and prays and he tells the people to go on, that they will have success." Sometimes the prophecies of the shaman are not so reassuring, however. "Before they leave camp they might all go in a body to the shaman. He conducts his ceremony, and if he feels that the raid will not come off safely, he says so, and the party does not go out."

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Raiding and warfare are the special interests of those who have supernatural power to find or frustrate the enemy. Therefore, one or more shamans are fairly sure to accompany any large war party. Not infrequently the leader himself is a man renowned for his religious attainments as well as for his military prowess. During the entire course of the journey the advice of those who claim revelations in regard to war are treated with respect. Even if the party does not include eminent shamans, the rank-and-file warriors do not fail to come ritually prepared:

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"Each warrior carries a bag of pollen. Pollen is given to him with other herbs if he gets sick [during the war expedition]."

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The entire encampment gathers to watch the departure of the group. "They start sometime in the morning. When they are going for a real fight, everyone sees them off. When the men leave in the morning, the women give their call of applause."

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The women, especially the wives of the departing men, have certain obligations during the absence of the warriors:

The women are careful about keeping the woodpile neat while the men are gone. The wood should be placed one way and should not be scattered, and the children should be kept off it for fear they will throw it around, and then the man will be lost. There are no other restrictions on the women when the husbands are out fighting. Some women pray when their husbands are out. Some are as religious as anything, but this praying is not general. During raids or wars the

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MAINTENANCE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

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women had to be good and behave carefully so as not to give bad luck to the man. All of a man's relatives were under this restriction.

When a very prominent man with many relatives has been slain, or when an attack on an unguarded camp has aroused great anger, caution is forgotten. "When we are at war and out for a fight, we go right to the trail and face the enemy in the daytime. We are not particular."

Once a San Carlos Indian cut off a Chiricahua's head, and it led to much trouble and an outbreak. J. was right in the particular Chiricahua bunch when it happened.

Some Chiricahua had been away from the reservation. The U.S. army men had been after them and had offered twenty-five dollars for every hostile Chiricahua's head brought in. This bunch of Chiricahua decided to come in. They came close to the agency and were eating there. They put J. on a ridge to watch and stand guard. Finally J. was relieved by another boy, a good-looking young Chiricahua. A few minutes later, as he was sitting on the ridge with his gun across his knees, looking in the opposite direction, a San Carlos Indian crept up behind him and shot him. As soon as he shot, he was on this boy with his knife and cut his head off.

The rest of the Chiricahua came up and saw what had been done. They were as angry as could be. They found out who had done this and went down to his camp to get him. But he had been warned and got away. His wife and several children were there, though, and they killed them and left them lying right there. They went out and began shooting into other near-by San Carlos camps. They were so angry they didn't care what they did. Then they made for the hills. And so there was another outbreak.

But ordinarily rage is tempered by reason, and the war party moves in a disciplined way:

When they start out they have two men ahead and two behind; they have scouts on every side. When they are ready to camp for the night, they send scouts ahead and in the directions to look for the enemy until dark comes. Early in the morning they do the same. These scouts come back and report.

On the march "the men of each cluster [extended family] stick together near their own leader." But, generally speaking, each person is responsible for his own welfare:

Each individual usually takes his own provisions with him. He takes some mescal and dried meat which he carries in a buckskin or hide bag attached to his shoulder strap [bandoleer]. The fire drill, if he has one with him, can be carried in this bag too. He carries water in a container made of the intestines of animals. He just ties the ends to keep it shut. He doesn't carry a water jar, because they